

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
Marine Corps University  
*User's Guide to Marine Corps Values*

**LEADERSHIP ROLES**

1. Introduction. General Bruce C. Clarke, USA (Ret) stated, "Rank is given you to enable you to better serve those above and below you. It is not given for you to practice your idiosyncrasies." In fact, the greater your rank, the greater are your responsibility and authority to influence the action to accomplish your mission and enhance your Marines' welfare. This authority and responsibility is inherent in your role as a Marine leader.

2. Overview. During this discussion we will examine Marine leaders' roles, traditional tasks and duties, interrelationships, and how to establish and maintain these relationships. We will look at rank structure, and discuss its role in defining the Marine team. This understanding will aid you in the future to mold your next unit into a cohesive and efficient fighting machine.

3. References. The following provide additional information on leadership roles in the Marine Corps:

The Marine Officer's Guide  
Handbook for Marine NCO's

4. Discussion Leader Notes. Not applicable.

5. Discussion

a. How an established rank structure aids the Corps in carrying out its mission.

(1) Marines exercise their duties, responsibilities, and authority within the Corps' organizational structure; without organization, the Corps would be a shapeless, ineffective force unable to carry out its assigned mission.

(2) The success of the Corps depends upon all Marines carrying out their duties and responsibilities to ensure mission accomplishment.

b. What does the rank structure provide for?

(1) A set chain of command provides the "who is in charge" structure required to get things done.

(2) Standardized organizational structure provides a base that allows personnel to move to different billets within the Corps and still understand what is going on.

(3) Established lines of communication define the "who needs to know" for the decision making process in the chain of command.

(4) Decentralized execution allows orders to be executed at the lowest organizational level affected by the decision.

c. Discuss the role a Marine is expected to fulfill in the structure.

(1) Two major roles a Marine is expected to fulfill are institutional (the role as a professional) and organizational (how a Marine functions in his/her role in the unit).

d. Institutional roles a Marine is expected to fulfill.

(1) An American fighting man in the Corps

(2) A Marine in his/her role as either an enlisted Marine or officer.

(3) A Marine serving in a specific grade.

(4) A Marine serving a specific MOS

(5) A Marine serving as a role model, an example for others combining all of the above.

(6) These roles center on the ideas and goals of expected behavior for Marines by the Marine Corps as a professional institution. The leadership traits and principles are examples of institutional behavioral ideals and goals for Marines.

e. Institutional ideals and goals Marines are expected to live up to.

(1) Adherence to the Code of Conduct.

(2) Service to the country through mission accomplishment.

(3) Being prepared to inflict death or injury on an enemy during war.

(4) Complying with the basic customs, courtesies, and traditions of the Corps.

(5) Serving as an example to subordinates in the performance of duty, in the sharing of hardship and danger, and above all in upholding the high standards of moral and ethical behavior.

f. Organizational roles Marines perform in their units.  
Organizational roles are often linked with or incorporated with institutional roles. These roles include additional expected behavior that goes with a specific unit, such as a member of the disbursing branch, recon battalion, or an aviation maintenance section. Such roles:

- (1) Enable the individual to identify with the unit.
- (2) Set the organization apart and give it a special nature.
- (3) May require the individual to adopt special customs, a different manner of dress, and a general personality characteristic.

g. How does being a senior affect your role?

- (1) Your understanding of what role you should play.
- (2) Your subordinates' expectations.
- (3) Your institutional and organizational roles.
- (4) Your acceptance of your responsibilities in your rank and position.
- (5) Your subordinates' realization of your responsibility for mission accomplishment.
- (6) Your subordinates' recognition that your ability to influence a given situation is limited.
- (7) The standards and ethics of the Corps and your unit.

h. What do subordinates expect from their leaders?

- (1) Honest, just, and fair treatment.
- (2) Consideration due them as mature, professional Marines.
- (3) A climate of trust and confidence.

(4) Acceptance of their errors and being allowed to learn from them.

(5) Personal interest taken in them as individuals.

(6) Loyalty.

(7) The best in leadership.

(8) That their needs be anticipated and provided for.

(9) To be kept informed.

(10) Clear-cut, positive decisions and orders which are not constantly changing.

(11) Demands on them that are commensurate with their capabilities.

(12) That work be recognized, and publicized when appropriate.

i. What do seniors expect from their subordinates?

(1) Fulfillment of your organizational roles.

(2) Responsible behavior and use of initiative.

(3) Loyalty to seniors as an example for subordinates and peers by giving willing and obedient service to orders, whether in agreement or not.

(4) If conflict exists, displaying the moral courage to bring it to the senior's attention.

(5) Using abilities for the good of the mission.

(6) Take action even though complete information may not be known.

j. How do Marines function and interact with one another within their institutional role?

Our day to day contact with one another as professional Marines crosses both unit and organizational boundaries and includes direct and indirect contact during business, social, or other nonsocial activities. Individuals interrelate in their institutional roles as members of the "Marine Team" and the "Band of Brothers", and as Marines in general during their day to day relationships.

k. How do Marines function and interact with one another within their organizational role?

The primary interrelationship is based on your organizational role. Here, operating within the authority of your position, you work to accomplish your mission, and see to your Marines' welfare. Within this role you are a senior, a peer, and a subordinate. Your effectiveness in accomplishing these roles is the result of your ability to function as a link in the chain of command by providing communication to subordinates regarding unit goals and objectives. As the senior you provide communication up the chain of command on your Marines' requirements to accomplish the mission.

l. Impact when a Marine fails in his/her individual responsibilities in his/her institutional role.

(1) Loses credibility.

(2) Overall prestige, respect, trust, and confidence and that of the Marine Corps are damaged.

(3) Sets a poor example for seniors, peers and subordinates.

(4) Failure may condone or reinforce the acceptance of lower standards of conduct, professionalism, discipline, morale, and esprit.

m. Impact when a Marine fails his/her individual responsibilities in his/her organizational role.

He/she may disrupt the normal functioning of the chain of command and communication flow. These problems may result in the senior's feeling the need for closer supervision, loss of confidence in subordinates, or feeling the need to personally make all the decisions.

n. Tasks and duties normally associated with officers.

(1) General officers provide long range goals and objectives, general guidance, and acquire the resources necessary to accomplish them.

(2) Field grade officers develop the plans and policies to achieve the goals and objectives within the guidance, assign missions to units, and allocate the resources.

(3) Company grade officers implement and execute the plans and their assigned mission to accomplish the goals and objectives utilizing the resources provided.

(4) Officers exercise command.

(5) Officers are accountable for mission accomplishment.

(6) Officers are accountable for unit readiness and performance.

(7) Officers set standards for units' performance.

(8) Officers are responsible for unit training.

(9) Officers delegate authority.

(10) Officers administer punishment under the UCMJ.

(11) Officers are responsible for the development and training of officers, SNCOs, and NCO's

(12) Officers are expected to support their Marines.

o. Traditional tasks and duties for noncommissioned officers. The NCO must be:

(1) A heroic leader who ensures unit success and is prepared to assume command of fighting units whose leaders have fallen. The NCO must be highly trained in warfighting skills.

(2) An accomplished small unit leader who knows his/her Marines and looks out for their welfare. He/she must be willing and able to step forward and take charge in directing the efforts of the unit toward the desired end. This is true whether the unit is a rifle squad, tank crew, work section, or maintenance shop. He/she must be available and approachable, a willing listener and advisor, able to help Marines resolve personal and professional problems.

(3) A front line supervisor. Effective NCO performance provides necessary unit cohesion.

(4) A technically proficient trainer/teacher and a role model dedicated to upgrading the performance of his/her Marines. As a teacher, the NCO provides the necessary instruction for the skill development of subordinates and the team building for coordinated action. As a role model, he/she sets the standard for how Marines should act.

(5) An enforcer of Marine Corps rules and regulations. He/she maintains professional standards and discipline.

(6) An advisor to the commander, providing necessary information to permit the commander to make qualified decisions, and to assist in problem solving.

p. Specific tasks and duties of NCOs.

(1) Train subordinates in their MOSs and basic military skills.

(2) Be accountable for actions of their squad, section, team.

(3) Enforce standards of military and physical appearance.

(4) Ensure supervision, control, and discipline of subordinates.

(5) Assist in personal and professional development of Marines.

(6) Provide the communication link between the individual Marine and the organization.

(7) Plan and conduct the routine daily operations within the policies established by the officers.

(8) Maintain the appearance and condition of unit billeting spaces, facilities, and work areas.

(9) Maintain serviceability, accountability, and readiness of assigned arms and equipment.

(10) Support, follow, and implement policy established by the officers.

(11) Maintain mutual respect with commissioned officers. This complementary relationship has a traditional, functional, and legal basis.

q. Roles/responsibilities of peers.

(1) To support and help each other.

(2) To compete in the spirit of enhancing esprit and mission accomplishment, and perfecting unit performance.

(3) To share victories, hardships, and lessons learned.

(4) To exert positive influence on their comrades by setting examples of obedience, courage, zeal, sobriety, neatness, and attention to duty.

r. Role of lance corporals and below.

(1) These Marines get the job done. No matter how difficult, how dangerous, how dirty, how heavy, how hot, how cold, or how wet, they get the job done.

(2) They carry out the General Orders of a sentry and other general and special orders, duties, and tasks assigned.

s. Some ways a leader can enhance working relationships and avoid duplication of effort and role conflict.

(1) Understand your role as the key to assisting you subordinates and seniors.

(2) Know the roles of seniors, peers and subordinates.

(3) Ensure your subordinates know and understand their roles and the roles of others around them.

(4) Train subordinates to accomplish their role, and be prepared to perform the role of their immediate supervisor.

(5) Provide subordinates feedback on how well they are accomplishing their role, and counseling them when necessary.

(6) Delegate the necessary authority for subordinates to accomplish their role, and ensure they realize what they are accountable for.

(7) Give them the necessary resources and freedom of action to accomplish their tasks.

(8) Give them the respect due their position and require others to do the same.

(9) Adhere to the standards of the Corps.

(10) Maintain open communication lines and squelch rumors.

(11) Ensure subordinates are capable of accomplishing assigned tasks.

t. What references aid us in role clarification.



(1) The Marine Officer's Guide- Chapters 11,16,17,21,22,and 24

(2) NCO Handbook- Chapters 1,12,13,14,15,17,18,19,21.

(3) MOS Manual

(4) Promotion Manual

(5) Appropriate FM/FMFM's

(6) Unit mission statements

u. Summary. Review the purpose statement with the group, and recap the major points discussed.

## 6. Appendices

Appendix A: Combat Leader's Code

## APPENDIX A

### LEADERSHIP ROLES

#### COMBAT LEADER'S CODE

You are a leader. The combat efficiency of your unit depends largely upon you and your ability to lead. You must inspire your Marines to perform their duties in keeping with the highest traditions and standards of the Marine Corps. If you are to lead Marines into battle and perhaps to their death, there are certain things you must know. There are certain qualities you must develop. There are certain things you must do.

You must know your job and do it well. You must know how to control and employ your unit under varied conditions in the attack, in the defense, on patrol in the jungle or desert, in built-up areas, in mined and booby trapped areas, in every situation, climate and place wherever your unit is required to fight. You must be skilled in the military sciences and in use of weapons with which your Marines are equipped. You must know how to employ these weapons and the damage they will inflict upon the enemy, his fortifications, weapons, and equipment. You must ensure your Marines know the basics: care and use of weapons and equipment, camouflage, fire and maneuver, cover and concealment, preparation of fighting positions, use of supporting arms, land navigation, discipline, hand to hand combat and other essentials on how to fight, survive, and win on the battlefield.

You must know your Marines and take care of them. You must learn all you can about each Marine in your unit: their background, their problems, their strong and weak points, their military skills, their endurance and courage. This knowledge will help you to predict and influence their actions; it will enable you to make the most of each Marine's abilities. You must maintain the esprit de corps of your unit by molding the individual spirits and talents of your Marines; by taking an interest in each individual; by taking care of them before taking care of yourself; by treating them fairly and firmly; by providing tough, realistic, fundamental training to ensure their success and survival; by thrusting goals into their lives to improve themselves, our Corps and Country. You must develop in them a deep pride to keep their honor clean. By knowing your Marines, you can teach them more effectively. You must prepare them mentally and physically for the demands of combat. You must instill an unconquerable, aggressive spirit which will make them desire to close with and destroy the enemy. You must build a feeling of comradeship and brotherhood, a team spirit that will make them victorious in battle and determined never to accept defeat. You must cultivate in them self-confidence; self-

discipline; a sense of responsibility; the persistence to overcome all obstacles; a sense of duty, honor, and love of Corps and Country.

You must know yourself and be a professional in every sense of the word. You must know your strong and weak areas and improve them. Your attitude should be positive and enthusiastic. Your performance and bearing should be beyond reproach. You must be thorough. You must be loyal to seniors, to peers, and to the Marines in your charge. Your integrity must be unquestionable. You must be morally responsible and worthy of special trust and confidence. You must communicate effectively, maintain a sense of honor, and remain flexible. You must keep your word, keep your head, and keep your temper.

It is not only what you know that's always important. It's what you do, and how and when you do it that counts. Positive action is the key. The best way to gain the confidence and respect of your Marines is to set a strong example. You must be a fighting example to your Marines. Treating them with dignity and respect and being calm, courageous, and decisive in combat will inspire your Marines to function effectively as a fighting team, to assault hot landing zones, hump backbreaking ridges, follow you to hell and back, and go the last hundred yards to victory!